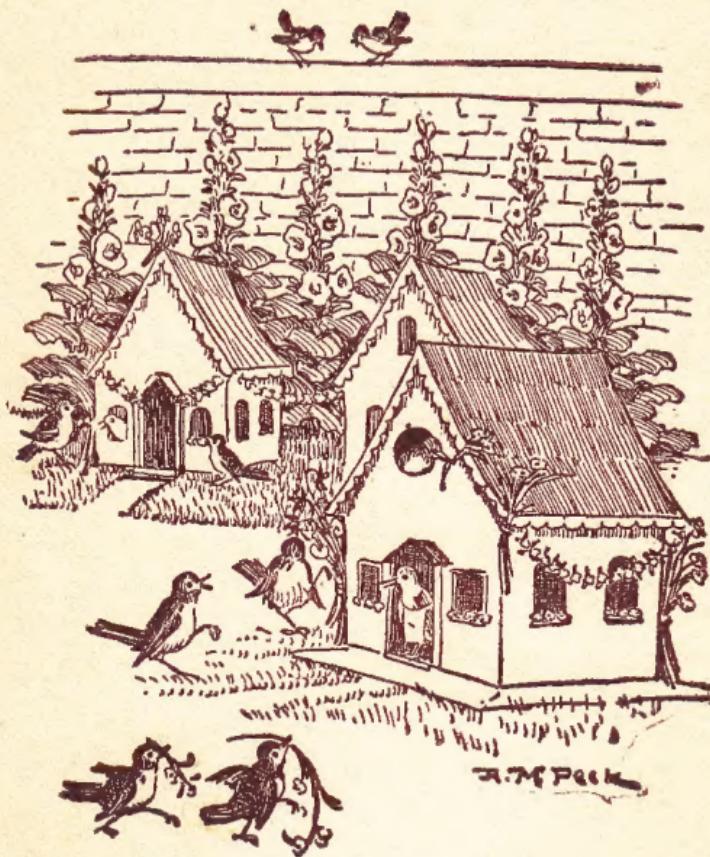


# Little Robin Redbreast



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Little Yellowbeak's parents had a great deal of taste.

# Little Robin Redbreast

By  
Carolyn Wells



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## LITTLE ROBIN RED-BREAST

Little Robin Redbreast sat upon a tree,—  
Up jumped Pussy Cat, down jumped he;  
Down jumped Pussy Cat, away Robin ran,  
Said Little Robin Redbreast, “Catch me if you can!”

Little Robin Redbreast jumped upon a wall,

Pussy Cat jumped after him and almost got a fall;  
Little Robin chirped and sang, and what did Pussy say?  
Pussy Cat said, "Mew!" and Robin jumped away.

Now, Kiddy-Cuddle, for the Bird Story; and you know yourself, Honey Blossom, there is nothing so nice as a Bird to tell a story about.

Little Robin Redbreast was the nicest, plumpest, reddest-breasted robin you *ever* saw, and one day he was hopping about on the ground, picking up crumbs; and as he

didn't find very many, he flew up in a cherry tree to peck at the cherries. His name was Yellow-beak, because he had such a long sharp yellow beak, and I can *tell* you, that beak made quick work with the cherries!

After Robin Yellowbeak had eaten all the cherries he wanted, he sat on a branch of the tree and sang a song. He was always singing songs, because he was a very gay and happy little bird, and he just loved to sing. And everybody who heard him loved his songs, too, because they were very pretty

songs and he sang them very well. But as he was singing away, he chanced to look down, and he saw a Pussy Cat strolling along. Now Pussy Cats have a bad habit of catching little Robin birds, and the little Robin birds don't like it a bit.

Pussy Cat's name was Puff, because she was a fat puffy old thing, with black and gray stripes. As Puff walked along under the tree, she heard Yellowbeak singing, but she pretended not to notice him.

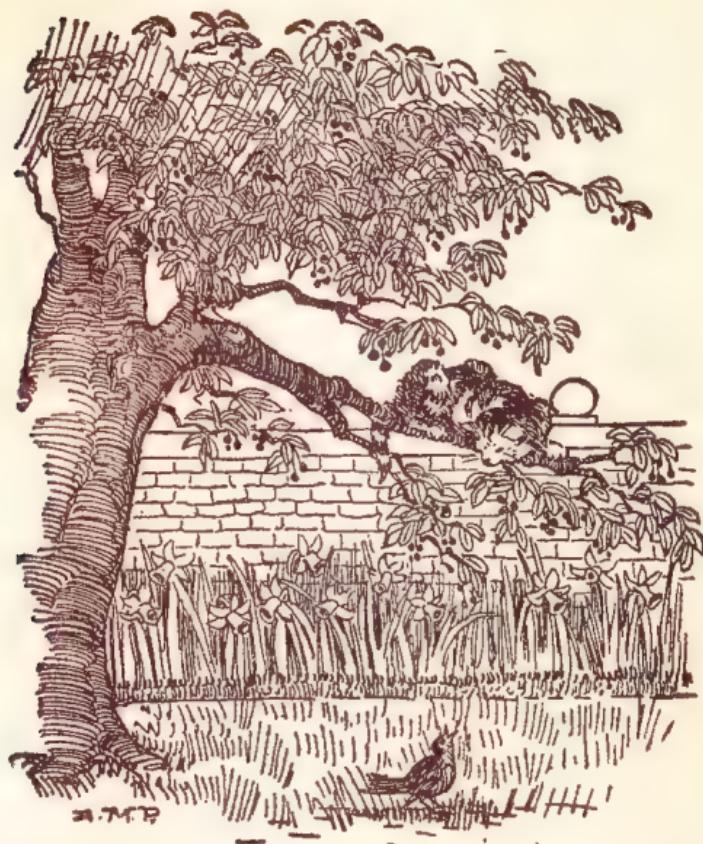
And Yellowbeak pretended not

to notice her; he just kept on singing and warbling and trilling the loveliest song you *ever* heard. But he kept one sharp little black eye fixed on Puff all the time, for he knew pretty well what was going to happen. And sure enough, as he was trilling away, Puff gave one spring and catching her claws in the tree trunk, scrabbled up so fast that almost before Yellowbeak knew it, she was on the same branch he was! But not *quite* before he knew it, and just as Pussy Cat jumped onto his branch, he jumped down on the ground!

And then, for he was a saucy little bird, he turned and looked around and looked up and sang a song right into Pussy's face.

Well, as you may imagine, Toddlekins, that Pussy Cat jumped right straight down, and expected to land with her little sharp claws in Yellowbeak's feathers; but, if you please, *just* before she landed, Robin flew away!

He flew up on top of a high wall, and of course Pussy Cat went after him and tried to scramble up the wall, but somehow she couldn't



He looked up and sang a song right into  
Pussy's face.

do it, and she almost got a bad fall, trying. Then little Robin chirped and sang gayer than ever, and *what* do you suppose Pussy Cat said? Why, she just said "Mew," but she said it over and over again, and mewed so loud and so long and so cross that Robin flew away.

And *where* do you suppose he flew to? Right over the wall into Birdville. Birdville was his home, and it was walled all around with a big high wall on *purpose* to keep the cats out. For cats and birds are most bitter enemies and when the Birds decided to build

the town of Birdville, the first thing they did was to make it safe against Cats. And so the high wall all around it was so smooth, that there was no place for a cat's claws to catch on. And there were no gates, because the birds didn't need them. If they wanted to go out of their city they just flew over the wall.

Now I will tell you all about Birdville, and then you'll know just what kind of a place Little Robin Redbreast lived in.

In the first place there were all sorts of Bird houses for sale

and to let. These Bird houses were just such as you often see set up on a high post; but in Birdville, they were all down on the ground because there was no danger of cats or anything harmful.

The Bird houses were arranged along little streets and while some were quite plain houses, others were very elaborate. They had little doors and windows and porches; and inside there were different rooms just such as you have in your own house. And the Birds would go in at the doors, and then sit down and look out at

the windows, almost like real people.

But some of the birds didn't like houses, and preferred cages. So for these, there was a whole street of Bird cages which was known as Bird Cage Walk. There were red and blue cages, and white cages, and brass cages, and a great big green cage where old Polly Parrot lived.

Of course the doors of the cages were all little swing doors, without fastenings, and the birds could go in and out as they liked. It was mostly canaries who lived on

this street, although a few of the cages were occupied by other birds. An old magpie lived in one, and she was such a curious old creature, and such a chatter-box, that she lived in a cage, so she could watch her neighbors and talk about them.

Then another part of Birdville was more like a garden, and it was full of bushes and shrubs, where birds could build nests if they wanted to. For some birds prefer nests to houses or cages, and in Birdville everybody took his choice of residence.

The orioles built their beautiful hanging nests which swung from the branches, and there were lots of little round nests, and sometimes there would be little blue eggs or little bits of young birds in the nests.

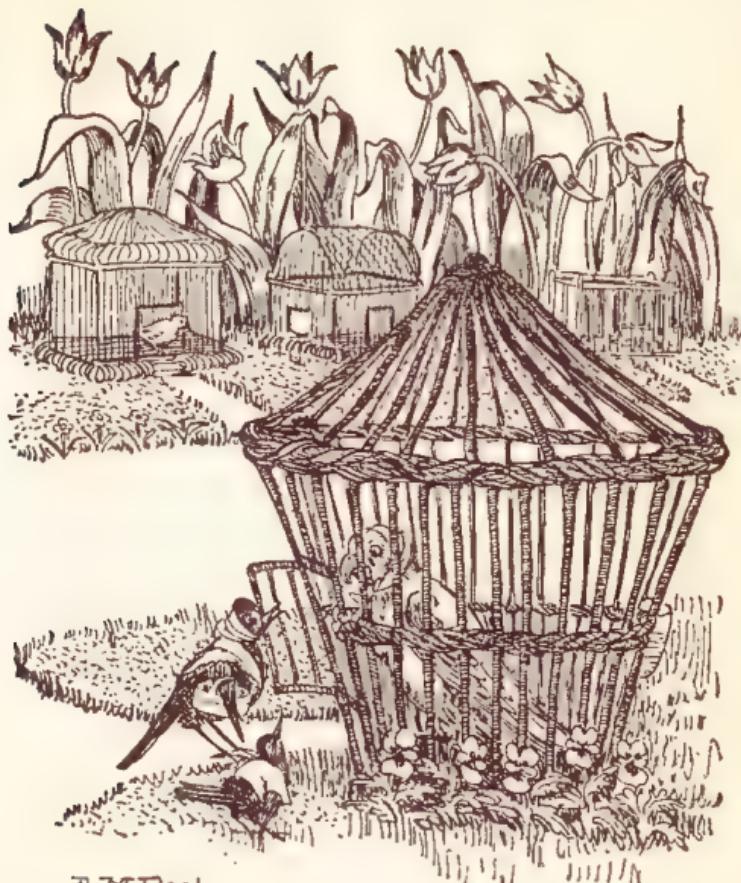
Then there was a very nice market in Birdville. Here the birds would come to market every morning, with their baskets on their wings, and buy lovely things to take home for dinner. They would buy grain of all sorts and berries and other small fruits and a few little vegetables. Two

beans or half a dozen peas would make a dinner for a whole family.

Near the market was a fine bakery where the birds could buy fresh baked crumbs every morning. And you know, Little-Bit-of-a-One, how fond birds are of crumbs. They could buy a dozen small crumbs of cake or a few big crumbs of bread, all nice and fresh, and you know how good fresh warm bread smells! Or they could buy crumbs of ginger-snaps and even crumbs of pie-crust for dessert.

Then besides the markets and stores, there was a beautiful school building, where the little birds went to school, and there was an Opera House where the birds gave wonderful concerts.

And in the middle of the town was a green square, a sort of park, and in the middle of that was a fountain, where all the birds could go and bathe. And a pretty sight it was to see the birds hop over the marble rim into the clear water, and hop out again, shaking their feathers and standing around in the sun to dry.



A. M. Peck

Mrs. Redbreast stopped for a moment  
to see old Poll Parrot.

Well, when our little friend Yellowbeak flew over the wall that morning, after escaping from Pussy Cat, he went straight to his own home.

This was one of the best houses in Birdville. It had a door in the middle and windows each side, and in front was a little flower garden full of lovely tiny flowers. And back of the house was a neat little kitchen garden, for the Robin Redbreasts were a very thrifty family. In the kitchen garden they raised bird seed, chickweed, and all kinds of things

that birds like to eat, and they kept the garden very neat and tidy.

Yellowbeak hopped in at his own front door and looked about for his mother, for he wanted to tell her how he had escaped from Pussy Cat.

But his mother wasn't in the parlor, nor in the sitting-room, so he hopped upstairs and there he found her in her own bedroom, standing in front of the mirror while she tied on her bonnet.

"Oh, mother," Yellowbeak exclaimed, "I 'most had an *awful* scare! I was sitting on a tree,

singing, and a great awful monstrous big cat jumped up on the tree! So I flied down, and the cat jumped down after me! So I flewed up on the wall, and you ought to have seen old Pussy Cat try to scramble-bamble up that wall! 'Course she just slipped back every time, 'cause she couldn't get her claws in at all. So I stood up on top of the wall and chirped and sang at her, and she was *awful* mad! she just mewed and mewed and mewed."

"That's right, my child," said his mother, who was still tying her

bonnet, "whenever you see a cat always fly for home. And don't dilly-dally around too long, for cats are very sly, and sometimes they spring faster than you think. You want to go to market with me, son?"

"Yes, mother; I love to go to market. And if Jimmy Chaffinch is down on the green, we're going in swimming together."

"Very well then, son, come along."

Mrs. Redbreast was ready now, and hanging her market basket on her wing, she locked the front door

and put the key under her mat, and they started off.

Of course everybody in Birdville was honest, but sometimes a stray hawk or a raven would fly over the wall, and they have been known to steal things out of the houses.

Going to market was always an interesting performance, for it meant much more than merely buying things to eat. The birds would congregate on the green, and gossip about the news, or they would exchange calls with one another in their houses or cages.

Mrs. Redbreast stopped for a moment to see old Poll Parrot who she had heard was not very well.

"Yes, I'm mizzabul," declared Mrs. Parrot, in a croaking voice; "I've got a pain in my left wing."

"It's rheumatism," said Mrs. Redbreast, "I should think you *would* get it living in a cage and the nights so damp, and you getting on in years. Why dont you take a house and be more sheltered?"

"Ho, ho," croaked the parrot, "no house for me! no, no, I want to see what's going on in the world,

I do. Hay-O Little Yellowbeak, how are you this morning?"

"I'm well, thank you, Mrs. Parrot," replied Yellowbeak, who was a polite little chap; "can I do any errands for you at the market?"

"Yes, I wish you would, child. I don't feel like going out this morning. Please ask the market-man to send me a small oyster cracker, and half a leaf of fresh lettuce."

Yellowbeak promised to do this errand, and then he and his mother went on. They went to the market, and Mrs. Redbreast looked

over the vegetables. She selected a small sprig of fresh green spinach, and a thimbleful of oat grains and a dozen crumbs of caraway cake.

These she tucked in her basket, and then they started back by way of the village green. Here several of Mrs. Redbreast's friends were standing around chatting, and she joined the group, setting her basket down on the ground beside her.

Miss Magpie was doing most of the gossiping, and she seemed to have something to say about everybody in the village. She made re-



Miss Magpie was doing most of the gossiping.

marks about Jenny Wren's clothes, and said she was surprised that such a nice girl should wear such a plain brown dress. But Mrs. Redbreast, who was very fond of little Jenny Wren, said she thought the girl dressed very simply and becomingly, and she thought her plain brown dress very neat and pretty. But it must be confessed that Mrs. Redbreast herself looked down at her own beautiful red garment, and spread her prettily marked wings and tail, and it was plain to be seen that she thought her own feathers pretty fine.

Miss Magpie herself, wore only black and white, but it made a very handsome combination and she was really a striking looking bird. Mrs. Oriole agreed with her that Jenny's Wren's clothes were too plain, but the Orioles are noted for their love of bright color.

Old Poll Parrot had managed to waddle out, and she joined the discussion. No one paid much attention to her, for though she always wore handsome clothes of a beautiful shade of green, she was such an old busy-body and talked

so much that she was not a favorite.

“Just you wait,” she said, in her loud, croaking voice, “till next week. I expect my friends Mr. and Mrs. Cockatoo to visit me, and then I guess you’ll see some fine clothes! They wear the most stunning colors of anybody I ever saw.”

“Yes, they do,” said Miss Magpie, “altogether *too* loud for *my* taste. Reds and greens and yellows all mixed together!”

“Hey!” screamed Poll Parrot, “Just because you affect black and

white, you needn't scoff at the cockatoos' taste! They have magnificent feathers."

"Yes, of course they do," put in Mrs. Redbreast, who was a sort of peacemaker. "Oh, here comes Mrs. Blue Jay. I think she has one of the prettiest costumes on."

Mrs. Blue Jay came up smiling. She was beautifully dressed in bright blue and gray and white, with little touches of black. She carried her market basket too, but she couldn't stop long, as she was expecting company to dinner.

Little Yellowbeak came sidling up to his mother, and asked if he might go swimming with Jimmy Chaffinch. And as she said he could, the two little fellows scampered off to the fountain. It was a bright sunshiny day and the water in the fountains rippled just a little, but not enough to make it too rough for the little birds. They stood for a moment side by side on the edge of the marble basin, and then with a jump they sprang into the water. They flapped their wings about and made the water fly in each other's

faces, and they laughed and chuckled and bobbed around in the water until their mothers called them and said it was time to go home. Then they hopped out again, and shook a spray of water all over as they flapped their wings.

Then Jimmy Chaffinch went home with his mother and Yellow-beak hopped along beside Mrs. Redbreast.

“Mother,” he began, “Jimmy Chaffinch says there’s going to be a pageant for King Peacock. What is a pageant, mother?”

“A pageant, my son, is a sort of festival.”

“Like a fair?”

“Not quite like a fair, because they don’t have things to sell. It’s more like an exhibition; and they have concerts and performances, and just a general celebration.”

“May I go to it?”

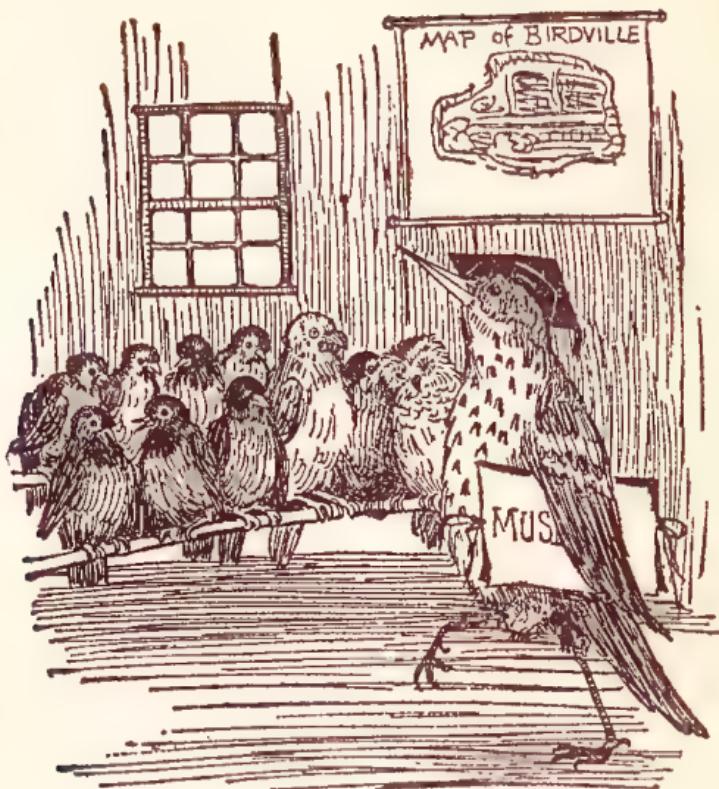
“Yes, of course, child; everybody in Birdville will go. It will be a very grand affair, for King Peacock doesn’t often come to our town, and of course all Birdville will do their best to have everything gay and festive. I suppose

we shall all sing in the chorus."

"What chorus, mother?"

"There will be a great chorus of all the song birds to sing a welcome to King Peacock. Of course the Robins will be in it. Professor Thrush will train us, and we'll have to practice for it a great deal. I suppose you will sing with the school children, and your father and I will be in the grand chorus."

Yellowbeak was greatly pleased with this, for he loved to sing and he thought the festival would be fine.



Professor Thrush waddled in.

The next morning he went hopping off to school. His mother gave him his luncheon to carry in a little basket. In the basket she had neatly packed three crumbs of bread and two crumbs of ginger-cake, and one raspberry and one cherry. Yellowbeak hung his basket on his wing, kissed his mother good-by and hopped away to school.

That day they had the class in Manual Training, and the birds were all taught how to build nests.

The teacher provided materials, such as bits of straw or hay and

shreds of cloth or threads of bright-colored yarn. The teacher was an old Weaver Bird and he was very kind and patient with the little birds who didn't know anything about nest-building. He showed them how to make the foundation, and how to round up the hollow, and how to finish it off; though of course they didn't learn all this in one day.

Yellowbeak worked very hard, and carried straws and threads to make the nest, and the teacher said he was a very good little boy.

Then it was time to eat their

luncheon, and all the little birds hopped out in the playground for recess. Such a chattering and flying about as there was! Some of the little birds traded the things they had to eat, and Jenny Wren offered to give Yellowbeak a small piece of apple for his raspberry. And Yellowbeak was glad, for he didn't like raspberry very much; and besides, he was glad to please little Jenny Wren, who was a great friend of his.

“Are you going to sing in the festival?” he asked her. And Jenny put her head on one side,

and whispered shyly, "I am if you are, but I'd be afraid to go alone."

She was a timid little thing, and Yellowbeak said he'd be very glad to march by her side in the procession and take care of her.

Then the bell rang and they all went back to the schoolroom.

The school teacher who was a big Woodpecker, said that Professor Thrush was coming to train them in singing by note, and he hoped they'd all be good and obedient children.

Professor Thrush waddled in. He was a fat, pompous-looking

bird, but he had a wonderful voice, and so he had been selected to train the chorus for the festival.

The little birds all sat in rows and most of them were very attentive, and tried to sing just as Professor Thrush told them to. He trilled high notes, and the little birds imitated him as well as they could.

But suddenly Little Jacky Sparrow and Little Billy Sparrow fell to fighting. They were quarrelsome little chaps, and they picked at each other, and flew around, and cheep-cheeped like everything!

“What *is* the matter?” asked the old Professor, who didn’t know what to make of this.

“Billy sang flat!” cried Jacky Sparrow.

“I didn’t either!” cried Billy Sparrow. “Somebody joggled me, —and the note came out wrong.”

“You don’t know *how* to sing! You haven’t any *voice*!”

“I have *so!* You can’t sing *yourself!*”

“*You’re* no good!”

“Neither are *you!*”

.. And then the two little sparrows flapped their wings, and flew at

each other, and clawed and scratched and bit and acted just perfectly dreadful! And poor old Professor Thrush stood wagging his head, and fluttering his wings, not knowing *what* to do!

Then Teacher Woodpecker said, "Jacky and Billy Sparrow, you're naughty children! You must either stop fighting and say you're sorry and behave like good little birds, or else you must go right home!"

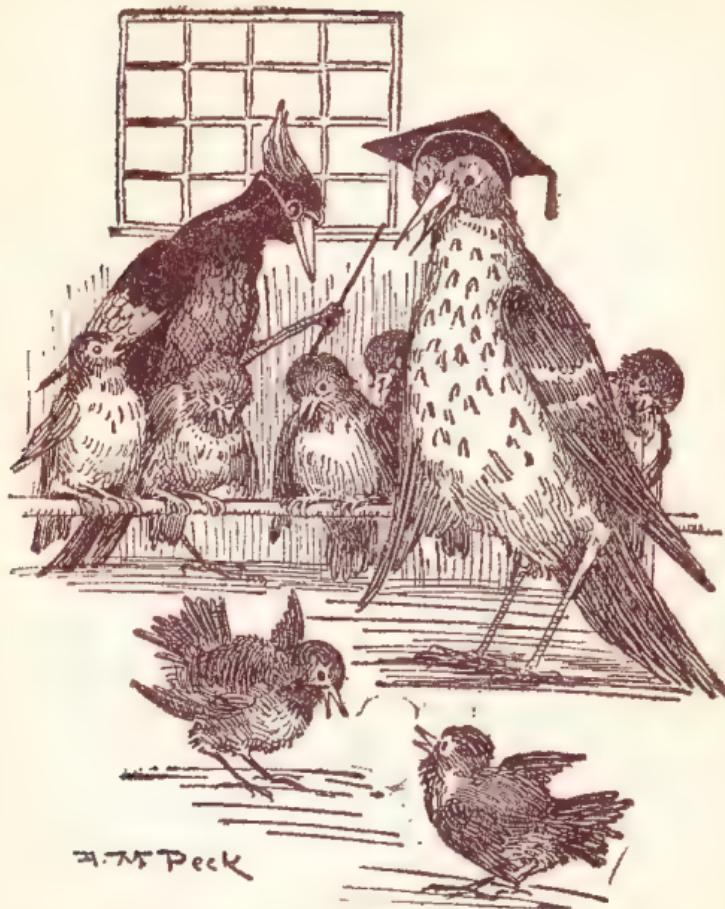
Now the little sparrows didn't want to go home, they wanted to stay and learn to sing. To be sure

they couldn't sing very well, and their cheep-cheep didn't sound like the Thrush's trill at all.

But as they promised to be good and gentle and not fight any more, and sing the best they could, the teacher said they might stay.

Then the singing lesson went on all right, until young Peter Parrot kicked up a bobby! He couldn't sing a note, he really had a most *dreadful* voice, but he was a fine talker, and he wanted to speak a piece.

"No, Peter Parrot," said the teacher, "this isn't piece-speaking



Suddenly little Jacky Sparrow and little Billy Sparrow fell to fighting.

day. That comes Friday afternoons. To-day we're just learning songs to sing at the festival."

"Want to speak piece at festival," growled Peter Parrot, ruffling up his green feathers, and looking very cross.

"No, they don't speak pieces at festivals, they only sing. Now Peter Parrot you must be good bird, and not make trouble, or else you must go home."

"Then I'll go home," said Peter Parrot, clambering down off his perch.

But if you could have seen, Too-

dlums, the way that bird acted on his way out of the schoolroom! He pranced along in a ridiculous fashion, and he squawked like everything, and he pecked at the birds as he passed them, and worst of all he made a face at old Professor Thrush. Now you know a Parrot's countenance is none too pretty, anyhow; and when he sets out to make a face, he *does* look like,—I don't know *what!*

Altogether, Peter Parrot behaved just about as bad as a bird *could*, and when he reached the schoolroom door, he just *flounced*

through it, and slammed it after him!

Why, the good little birds were simply *shocked* at the way Peter Parrot behaved, and when he was gone, Teacher Woodpecker was so glad he didn't know what to do!

Then the singing began again, and all the little birds were very good and tried to do just as they were told.

But presently a discordant note was heard, and Professor Thrush looked up quickly. "Who's that singing flat?" he said.

“Please, sir,” said Little Robin Redbreast, “it isn’t singing, but little Willy Owl has gone to sleep, and is snoring.”

“Poor child,” said the Professor, kindly, “he can’t help it; Owls will fall asleep in the day-time. But he does disturb the class, so he may as well go home.”

So they gently waked up little Willy Owl, and told him to go home. And as he was very sleepy, and he couldn’t sing anyway, he toddled off quite contentedly, and went home and went to bed.

Well, soon after that, the sing-

ing lesson was over, and they all went home.

As Little Robin Redbreast hopped along, he passed a big old wise Owl who was a night watchman, and so now he was off duty. He happened to be the uncle of little Willy Owl, and he was one of the wisest citizens of all Birdville.

“Well, Yellowbeak,” he said kindly, “I suppose you’re going to sing in the chorus.”

“Yes, sir,” said Yellowbeak, and then he told the old Owl how little Willy Owl had gone to sleep in school.

“Yes, yes,” said the old fellow, “it’s very hard for young owls to keep awake in the daylight. I’m a little drowsy, myself. But when I patrol the wall at night I’m wide awake I can tell you.”

Then Little Yellowbeak told the old Owl about Pussy Cat who had jumped after him, and had tried to climb the wall.

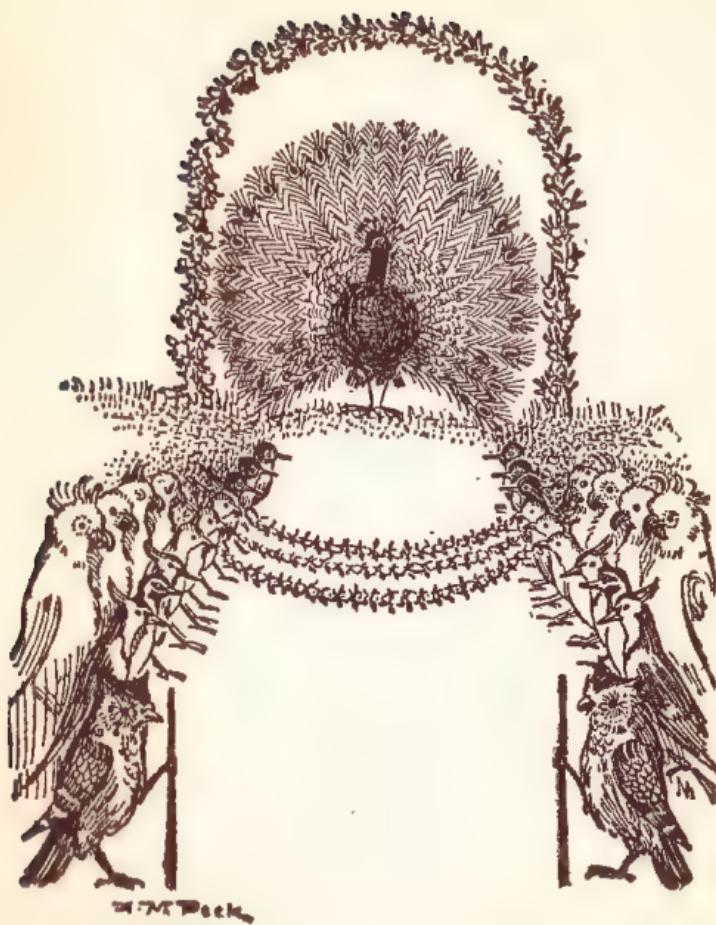
“That’s old Puff!” exclaimed the owl. “She’s a terror! I declare I don’t know but we’ll have to build the wall higher. She’s an awful climber, and she does manage to find *something* to

catch her claws into! If she's prowling again, there's going to be trouble. I'm glad you told me, Yellowbeak; I must look into this matter."

Well, that very night, while the old Owl was walking up and down along the top of the wall to make sure no harm would come to Birdville, he saw old Puff prowling again. She moved along very quietly, and kept in the dark shadow; but Owls can see in the dark, and old Captain Owl saw Puff sneaking along at the foot of the wall.

She didn't see him, because she was so intent on finding a rough place where she could climb up. And she did find a place where the plaster was broken, and she could get her claws in, and the first thing Captain Owl knew Puff was almost half-way up the wall!

Captain Owl gave a series of short, sharp hoots, which was the signal for all the able-bodied citizens of Birdville to come to the rescue. Like a flash, the birds flew out of their houses and cages and soon stood like a small army



Truly he was a noble King of Birds as he stood there to greet them.

upon the wall. The hawks and blackbirds and crows and ravens wanted to attack at once, but Captain Owl marshalled his forces, and said they would parley with the Cat.

“We have a big army up here,” said Captain Owl to Puff, “and if you insist on coming up we will all attack you. Do you want to be attacked?”

“Pooh!” said Puff, who was now half-way up the wall, “I don’t mind your attack. I shall kill many of you and injure most of the others.”

This was true, and Captain Owl hesitated to order an attack which would mean such disaster to his army. And the birds themselves didn't want to be killed or hurt. They were all fathers of families, or else elder sons, and they didn't want to leave all the women and children birds helpless.

But old Puff was climbing higher and higher, and they could hear her scratching on the wall, and growling softly in her throat.

What to do, they didn't know,

when suddenly Amy Letty appeared, standing down at the foot of the wall.

"Oh, Amy Letty," cried Captain Owl, "*Do* catch Puff, and take her away! My brave armies are willing to fight, but I know a battle would mean horrible loss of life on our side before we could vanquish the enemy."

"All right," said Amy Letty, "I'll catch her. Come here, Puff!"

But Puff, who was far above Amy Letty's reach, only turned around and laughed at her.

“Ho! ho! Amy Letty,” she said, “you can’t catch me! You may as well go home! I’m out after birds to-night, and I think I’ll catch a few!”

“You do, do you?” said Amy Letty, “well, *I* think you’re much mistaken! Hi! Towser! at her, Towser!”

Now if there was one thing that Puff was afraid of, it was Dog Towser; and when he made a spring toward the cat, she gave one yell, and scooted off so fast that she just looked like a streak of gray fur! Towser ran after

her, and whether he ever caught her or not, I don't know, but the birds were in a high state of jubilee over their safety, and raised a chorus of thanks to Amy Letty for her kindness.

"Oh, that's all right," said Amy Letty, as she turned to go home; "but to-morrow you'd better mend your wall. It doesn't seem to be cat-proof."

So the birds promised it should be attended to the next day, and then Amy Letty went home and all the birds went back to bed, except Old Captain Owl who

kept up his sentry duty all night long.

The next day the wall was repaired, and made so smooth that it was impossible for a cat to catch her claws in anywhere.

And then all the birds turned their attention to the great work of getting the town ready for the Pageant of King Peacock.

The Peacock was king of all the bird tribes, and when he deigned to visit any town or village, of course it was a great honor, and the birds took pride in giving him a fine welcome.

They had committees that met and decided what everybody must do; and they had other committees to look after the great parade, and others for the refreshments, and still others to keep peace and order in the streets. For birds are quick-tempered little creatures and the sparrows were liable to start up a street-fight any minute.

The work of decoration progressed rapidly, for each bird householder wanted his place to look as good as his neighbors'.

Little Yellowbeak's parents

had a great deal of taste, and they decorated their house beautiful. They got long streamers of ribbon grass and had them floating from every door and window. Then they put red geranium blossoms in every window, and all along the roof, which made it look gay and festive.

Some of the birds made little garlands of blossoms and festooned them across the front of their houses, and some took tall grasses and stood them up at the corners and tied them with bunches of flowers.



*M.M. Peck*

He felt a little frightened when he stood up to sing all alone before King Peacock.

In fact the whole of Birdville seemed to be one big flower-garden, and many of the birds flew up on the wall, and strolled around there to get a view of the decorations.

“It’s just lovely!” said Little Robin Redbreast to his parents, as they walked on the wall, “and I think our house the prettiest of all.”

“Prettiest of the houses, perhaps,” said his father, “but the Town Hall looks very fine, with its noble decoration of tall ferns and violets.”

"I think Poll Parrot's house is too gay," said Mrs. Redbreast, critically, "but she has the Cockatoos visiting her, and she says they like bright colors. See, it is all trimmed with tulips of the gaudiest hues!"

"It is very handsome in its way," said Mr. Redbreast, who was a very just Bird, "and now let us go down into the village again, and see how things are getting on."

The three Robin Redbreasts flew down together, and alighted

in the beautiful green park in the middle of the city.

This park had been trimmed up especially for the choral exercises of the festival. There was a grand-stand for the singers, all decked with flowers and vines, and little banners waving. And on the banners it said "Welcome to King Peacock!"

"Isn't it beautiful!" exclaimed little Yellowbeak, who never had seen anything like it before.

And then they went home to get rested and ready for the grand

festival which was to be that very afternoon.

Just before time for the festival Old Captain Owl came flying into Mr. Redbreast's house in great excitement.

"What *shall* I do?" he exclaimed; "there's an awful quarrel going on! I was just getting the parade in order, when the Blue Jays and the Woodpeckers fell to fighting!"

"What about?" asked Mr. Robin Redbreast, who was one of the City council, and a very able bird indeed.

“They both want to march first!” said old Captain Owl, who was all in a flutter. “About forty Blue Jays and fifty Red-Crested Woodpeckers are fighting like fury on the village green! They’re upsetting things, and spoiling the decorations, and I declare I’m at my wit’s end! Do come and help me make peace among them somehow!”

“It’s disgraceful!” exclaimed Robin Redbreast, as he hopped along beside Captain Owl. “I don’t know what Birdville is coming to lately! Perhaps the

visit of King Peacock will make our citizens more peaceful and good-natured."

The two soon reached the village green, and sure enough the Blue Jays and the Woodpeckers were fighting like everything, to march first in the parade.

Robin Redbreast hopped up on the grand-stand and proceeded to make a speech.

"Fellow birds," he said, "it is really disgraceful, the way you're acting! Especially to-day, when everything ought to be all peace and harmony for our King's visit.

I'm *ashamed* of you, and I appeal to you as citizens of our pretty town, to remember what is due to this occasion, and I beg of you to stop this foolish fighting, and fall in line properly."

"*We* ought to go first!" shouted the Woodpeckers, and, "*we* ought to go first!" shouted the Blue Jays.

Robin Redbreast saw that they would never come to terms, so he said, "Well, let us fix it this way. Let us make the first division of the parade of Blue Jays and Woodpeckers both. They can stand alternately; a Blue Jay and

a Woodpecker, a Blue Jay and a Woodpecker."

Well, this seemed to suit everybody, and the birds stopped fighting and fell into line as nice and quiet as you please!

"Well, well," muttered the old Owl, "I thought I was a wise bird, but you have proved yourself wiser, Robin Redbreast."

"Oh, you're wise enough at night, Captain Owl," said Robin, "but all your family are a little hazy in the day-time. That's all right, I'm glad to give you any assistance I can. Now get the

parade in order, for it's time to go and meet the King."

Then the escort parade which was to go to meet King Peacock, fell into line, and very beautiful and impressive it looked.

The front ranks were Blue Jays and Woodpeckers, all marching in perfect harmony. After them, came a squad of Parrots, and with them were all their various relatives, Cockatoos, Macaws, Paroquets and others of that gorgeous-hued tribe. This division was the most striking-looking of all, and they marched with

great precision, keeping perfect step.

They were followed by a flock of doves. These pretty birds had long garlands of flowers, which passed from beak to beak, making a festoon along the line. All the other birds followed, each classed by themselves and each division trying to do its best to look fine and march well.

With the Owls for sentinels and general managers, the birds followed the line of march to the place where they were to meet King Peacock.



He smiled very kindly on the Redbreast family.

This was a triumphal arch which had been built and decorated for the occasion.

Very few of the birds of Bird-ville had ever seen King Peacock before, and though they had heard much about him, they were scarcely prepared for his grandeur and splendor.

And truly he was a noble King of Birds, as he stood there to greet them. His magnificent tail spread until it nearly filled the arch, and the sunlight shone on its wonderful colors until they sparkled like jewels and gold.

His beautiful graceful neck showed its changeable blue and green, and the tuft on his head was like a crown.

The birds stood gazing at him, spellbound, and then King Peacock made his speech.

“My dear subjects,” he began, “I am glad to visit your village, and I thank you for this beautiful welcome you are giving me. I have only one word to say to you more, and that is I want you all to be kind and loving birds, and *never* fight and quarrel among yourselves. Birdville should be

like one loving, united family, and there is nothing that *spoils* a family like a little quarrel or fight. Whether birds or animals or children, the whole family should be kind and loving and never say a cross word to each other.”

There was great applause at the King’s speech, and all the Blue Jays and Woodpeckers looked lovingly at each other, and said they would never quarrel again. And the little sparrows said they would never fight any more. And the Poll Parrots resolved to be better-tempered, and the Owls

thought they would be less gruff, and in fact everybody in Birdville resolved to be gentle and loving and kind, as King Peacock wished them to.

Then the great parade escorted King Peacock back to the Park in the middle of the city, where the celebration was to be carried out.

They had contests of various sorts, and King Peacock and Captain Owl were the judges, and awarded the prizes.

Two Woodpeckers gave a wood-pecking match, and it made the birds laugh to see how swiftly a

Woodpecker could peck wood if he wanted to. Why, in the short time given to them, they had each pecked out such a big pile of wood from a tree-trunk, that it was almost impossible to tell which had pecked the most. So they had to measure the wood.

Another contest was a flight of swallows. This was a very pretty sight, as twelve swallows started at once on their graceful flight. They had to circle around a distant church steeple and return again to the starting point. Some went one way and some another,

but they all made a wide, graceful sweep around the steeple, and flew back to receive various prizes according to their speed.

It had been on the program that two little sparrows were to fight, but after the King's speech, this number was hastily crossed off and nothing was said about it.

After all, the parrots had been allowed to give recitations. This was very interesting, for the parrots had chosen very beautiful poems, and had learned to recite them with great dramatic effect.

They did so well that it was

hard to tell which was the best, but King Peacock finally decided to award the prize to little Peter Parrot, the very one who had been so bad in school!

Of course the King didn't know this, and anyway Peter Parrot did recite beautifully, and after he received his prize, he said he never would be a bad boy in school any more.

A very pretty entertainment was when two canaries performed on the trapeze. Canaries are very fond of trapeze work and these two swung back and forth,

and jumped and flew, and turned somersaults in the air, and caught each other by one claw, and swung from each other's trapeze, and did really wonderful tricks!

King Peacock was delighted with this show, and said they must both have prizes, and Captain Owl quite agreed with him.

Then after that came the contest of the Song Birds.

But first there was a grand concert where they all sang together, and such beautiful music you never heard! The Thrushes, the Wrens, the Nightingales, the

Canaries, the Linnets, the Robins, and the Skylarks all trilled in perfect harmony, and the little school-birds, who had been well trained by Professor Thrush, sang with them.

And after that, many birds sang solos, and a prize was to be given to the best singer.

The Thrush and the Wren sang beautiful solos, and so did the Linnet and Skylark, but everybody thought that the real contest would be between the Nightingale and the Canary. Some of the school-children were allowed

to sing solos and Little Yellowbeak was one of these.

He felt a little frightened when he stood up to sing all alone before King Peacock. And his little breast heaved and his little wings trembled and his yellow beak shook so that he could scarcely sing a note. And then he thought to himself, "I will try to forget where I am, and I will pretend it is a summer morning, and the sun is shining bright, and I am out in the orchard on a top bough of a cherry tree."

Now you know, Kiddy-Cuddle,



A. M. Peck

Little Robin Redbreast was so sleepy  
that he fell asleep the minute his head  
touched the pillow.

that all those things make a little Robin so happy that he just sings his very *heart* into his joy! So when Little Robin Redbreast imagined all this, he sang so happily and such a true and sweet little song, that everybody was amazed; and his mother wiped a little tear out of her eye as she murmured to herself, "Bless the Boy!"

Then King Peacock gave prizes to the birds he thought sang the best, but he said he should give a special prize to Little Robin Redbreast because he never had heard such a young bird sing so well!

Well, may-be little Yellowbeak wasn't delighted! He hadn't thought of such a thing as getting a prize, and he had put his whole heart into his song, because he wanted to do the best he could to do honor to King Peacock.

And then the program was over and they all went to the great tent where the feast was set forth. There were tables and tables full of the most beautiful things! Crumbs of every degree of richness and delicacy; luscious fruits of all sorts, and everything that a bird could like to eat.

Nothing was passed around, because that is not bird manners, but the birds strolled about, pecking here and there at such food as they wanted. For you know a bird is very dainty, and he can easily peck up a berry or a crumb without disturbing the rest of the dish.

King Peacock walked around in stately fashion, but he was very kind and pleasant to all the birds, and everybody that could, made an opportunity to speak to him.

He smiled very kindly on the Redbreast family, and told the

parents that they had a fine young son in Little Yellowbeak. Of course Mr. and Mrs. Redbreast were much gratified at this, and thanked the King for his kind words.

"And I hope," said King Peacock, looking at Yellowbeak, "that you will grow up a fine and noble gentleman like your father, and never give way to the quarreling spirit which I find in a great many birds."

"I will try," said Little Robin Redbreast, "to be a good little boy and grow up into a good man.

And thank you, King Peacock,  
for my beautiful prize, and I will  
try to sing well enough always to  
deserve it!"

And then the King's visit was  
over, and the parade escorted him  
back again, and again all the birds  
sang in chorus, and the Robins  
and the Thrushes and the Linnets  
and the Wrens and the Nightin-  
gales and the Skylarks and the  
Canaries and the Blackbirds all  
joined in a wondrous chorus of  
harmony.

And then all the birds went  
home to bed, and Little Robin

Redbreast was *so* sleepy, that he  
fell asleep the minute his head  
touched the pillow!

